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REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated June 23, 2006. Claims 21 to 40 are in the application, and all of these claims have been indicated to contain allowable subject matter. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for his indication that Claims 21 to 34 have been allowed. Changes have been made to Claims 25 and 26, so as to use language more similar to that used in Claims 21 and 24, respectively. It is not believed that these changes affect allowability.

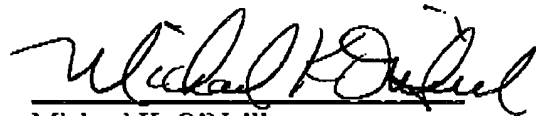
Applicants also thank the Examiner for his indication that Claims 35 to 40 contain allowable subject matter. In response to the formal objection lodged against Claim 35, a grammatical correction has been effected to that claim. Likewise, in response to the rejection under § 112 of independent Claim 35 for insufficient antecedence, the phrase "said masking control step" has been amended so that it reads "said control step". In view of these changes, it is believed that all of Claims 35 to 40 are also allowable.

Claims 41 to 48 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent 6,222,611 (Asada). These claims have all been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding the correctness of the rejection, but rather to secure an earlier allowance of the instant application. Accordingly, this should be viewed as a traversal of the foregoing rejection.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



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